Gender Neutrality in the Armed Forces

194. SHRI EKANATH K. THAKUR: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that although the decision to induct women into the army was taken in 1992, women officers are allowed entry only into the non-combatant wings of the forces;

(b) whether it is also a fact that in the army, women officers serve only in corps of signals, ordnance or intelligence, while women Air Force Officers are drafted into logistics or ground duty and women pilots fly only transport planes such as Avro or AN-32 or helicopters such as Chetak or Cheetah; and

(c) if yes, the steps Government proposes to take so that all specialities are open on gender-neutral standard?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE): (a) The decision taken in 1992 envisaged induction of women in the non-combatant wings of the armed forces only.

(b) In addition to Signal, Ordnance and Intelligence Corps, women officers in the Army serve in Air Defence Artilery, Engineers, Army Services Corps, Army Ordnance Corps, Electrical and Mechanical Engineering, Army Education Corps and Judge Advocate General Branch. In the Air Force, women officers are being inducted in all the streams except fighter stream.

(c) No such proposal is under consideration.

Changes in Defence Purchase Policy

195. SHRIMATI S.G. INDIRA: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that several units of Public Sector Undertaking specializing in products for the defence sector have surplus capacity and that these units lack orders from the Government;

(b) whether it is also a fact that the Government is considering to make changes in the defence purchase policy to ensure that when any equipment is imported it should be through the buy-and-make mode with transfer of technology instead of resorting to the buy-only mode; and

(c) if so, the reasons therefor?